



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/686,822	10/12/2000	Harry J. Chmielewski	53394.000443	5377

7590 01/12/2006

Christopher C. Campbell
Hunton & Williams
Suite 1200
1900 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

EXAMINER

ANDERSON, CATHARINE L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3761

DATE MAILED: 01/12/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/686,822	Applicant(s) CHMIELEWSKI, HARRY	
	Examiner C. Lynne Anderson	Art Unit 3761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 October 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,6,7,9-13,17,18 and 20-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,6,7,9-13,17,18 and 20-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>10/28/05</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 24 October 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant's arguments with respect to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) have been considered but are not persuasive. In response to the applicant's argument that the ratio disclosed by Harada in column 18 is of hydrotalcite to denaturant rather than hydrotalcite to superabsorbent, it is noted that the ratio of superabsorbent to denaturant is given in column 17, lines 7-14, and this in combination with the ratio of hydrotalcite to denaturant show a ratio of hydrotalcite to superabsorbent within the claimed range.

Applicant's arguments with respect to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) have been considered but are not persuasive. In response to the applicant's argument that the cited references fail to disclose the limitations found in claims 1 and 10, it is noted that the ratio of hydrotalcite to superabsorbent is disclosed within the claimed range by Harada, as disclosed in the paragraph above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Art Unit: 3761

Claims 1, 6, 7, 9, and 21-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kajikawa et al. (5,478,879) in view of Harada et al. (6,150,469).

Kajikawa discloses all aspects of the claimed invention but remains silent as to the amount of hydrotalcite present in the composition.

With respect to claims 1 and 6, Kajikawa discloses a superabsorbent composition comprising an underneutralized superabsorbent polymer in which less than 70% of the functional groups are neutralized, as disclosed in column 5, lines 49-51, and column 24, Claim 13. The superabsorbent polymer is neutralized by sodium, as disclosed in column 15, Example 4. The composition further comprises a layered double hydroxide anionic clay, hydrotalcite, as disclosed in column 8, line 54.

Harada discloses the use of hydrotalcite in a superabsorbent composition, as described in column 17, lines 47-65. The superabsorbent polymer and hydrotalcite are present in a ratio ranging from 1:1 to 1:10, as disclosed in column 17, lines 7-14, and column 18, lines 19-25, to prevent the superabsorbent polymer to react with the additives, as disclosed in column 18, lines 25-32.

It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to provide the superabsorbent polymer and hydrotalcite of Kajikawa in a ratio ranging from 1:1 to 1:10 to prevent the superabsorbent polymer from reacting with the additive, as taught by Harada.

With respect to claim 7, the claim discloses a product-by-process limitation. The claim is drawn to an article, and the final product disclosed by Kajikawa is structurally

Art Unit: 3761

identical to the product claimed. Kajikawa therefore discloses the article disclosed in the claim.

With respect to claims 21 and 22, Kajikawa discloses less than 40% of the functional groups are neutralized, as disclosed in column 5, lines 49-51, and column 24, Claim 13.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kajikawa et al. (5,478,879) in view of Harada et al. (6,150,469) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Jones, Sr. (3,794,034).

Kajikawa discloses all aspects of the claimed invention but remains silent as to the pH range. Jones discloses an absorbent article having a pH in the range of 3.5 to 6.0, as described in column 1, lines 34-40. This pH range is preferred for absorbent articles because it inhibits bacterial growth, as disclosed in column 1, lines 52-56. It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to construct the composition of Kajikawa with a pH in the range of 3.5-6.0, as taught by Jones, to inhibit bacterial growth.

Claims 10-12, 17-18, 20, and 23-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kajikawa et al. (5,478,879) in view of Harada et al. (6,150,469), and further in view of Masaki et al. (5,821,179).

Kajikawa discloses all aspects of the claimed invention but remains silent as to the amount of hydrotalcite present in the composition.

With respect to claims 10, 17, and 20, Kajikawa discloses a superabsorbent composition comprising an underneutralized superabsorbent polymer in which less than 70% of the functional groups are neutralized, as disclosed in column 5, lines 49-51, and column 24, Claim 13. The superabsorbent polymer is neutralized by sodium, as disclosed in column 15, Example 4. The composition further comprises a layered double hydroxide anionic clay, hydrotalcite, as disclosed in column 8, line 54. Kajikawa teaches the use of the composition in a diaper, as described in column 1, lines 17-19, but remains silent as to the construction of the diaper.

Harada discloses the use of hydrotalcite in a superabsorbent composition, as described in column 17, lines 47-65. The superabsorbent polymer and hydrotalcite are present in a ratio ranging from 1:1 to 1:10, as disclosed in column 17, lines 7-14, and column 18, lines 19-25, to prevent the superabsorbent polymer to react with the additives, as disclosed in column 18, lines 25-32.

It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to provide the superabsorbent polymer and hydrotalcite of Kajikawa in a ratio ranging from 1:1 to 1:10 to prevent the superabsorbent polymer from reacting with the additive, as taught by Harada.

Masaki discloses an absorbent article 100, as shown in figure 12, comprising a liquid pervious topsheet 1, a liquid impervious backsheet 3, and an absorbent core 2. The absorbent core 2 includes fluff pulp 12 and a superabsorbent composition 16, as shown in figure 1B. The mixture of pulp and superabsorbent reduces gel blocking, as disclosed in column 7, lines 7-13.

It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to produce an absorbent article comprising the superabsorbent composition of Kajikawa with the structure taught by Masaki to reduce gel blocking of the superabsorbent composition.

With respect to claims 11-12, Kajikawa, as modified by Masaki, discloses all aspects of the claimed invention with the exception of the superabsorbent present in the amount ranging from about 0.2 to about 0.8 grams per gram of fluff pulp. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to include the superabsorbent in the range of about 0.2 to about 0.8 grams per gram of fluff pulp, since it has been held that where the general conditions of the claim (i.e. a ratio of superabsorbent to fluff pulp) are known in the art, finding the optimum or workable ranges requires only routine skill in the art.

With respect to claim 18, the claim discloses a product-by-process limitation. The claim is drawn to an article, and the final product disclosed by Kajikawa is structurally identical to the product claimed. Kajikawa therefore discloses the article disclosed in the claim.

With respect to claims 23 and 24, Kajikawa discloses less than 40% of the functional groups are neutralized, as disclosed in column 5, lines 49-51, and column 24, Claim 13.

Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kajikawa et al. (5,478,879), Harada et al. (6,150,469), and Masaki et al. (5,821,179) as applied to claim 10 above, and further in view of Jones, Sr. (3,794,034).

Kajikawa, as modified by Harada and Masaki, discloses all aspects of the claimed invention but remains silent as to the pH range. Jones discloses an absorbent article having a pH in the range of 3.5 to 6.0, as described in column 1, lines 34-40. This pH range is preferred for absorbent articles because it inhibits bacterial growth, as disclosed in column 1, lines 52-56. It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to construct the composition of Kajikawa with a pH in the range of 3.5-6.0, as taught by Jones, to inhibit bacterial growth.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

Art Unit: 3761

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to C. Lynne Anderson whose telephone number is (571) 272-4932. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tanya Zalukaeva can be reached on (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

CUA
cla
January 6, 2006

SUPERVISORY PRIMARY EXAMINER

**TATYANA ZALUKAEVA
SUPERVISORY PRIMARY EXAMINER**

